

ARCHITECTURE + LANDSCAPE TOUR OF
Central Park

Marieke Gruwel

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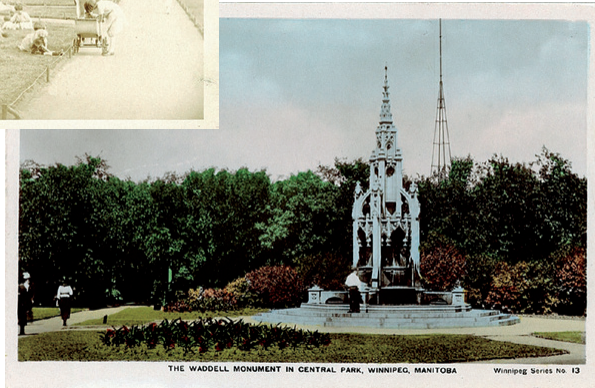
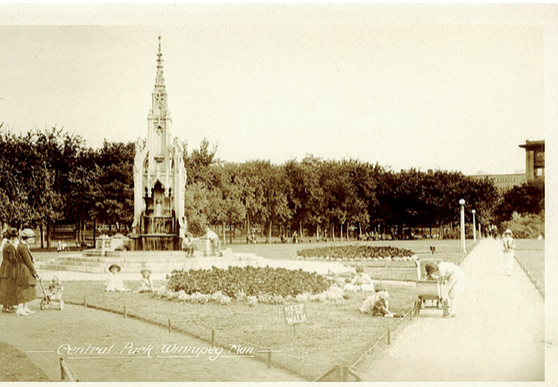
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Winnipeg Architecture Foundation

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Postcards depicting Central Park from the Prairie Postcard Collection. Images courtesy of Peel's Prairie Provinces, a digital initiative of the University of Alberta Libraries.



The History of Central Park

The year 1893 was exciting in Winnipeg. The newly formed Public Parks Board bought property to create Winnipeg's first four parks. When the land was purchased, the City did not refer to the areas as parks; instead, they called them "ornamented squares or breathing centres." One of these ornamented squares was Central Park, which was purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company for \$20,000.

Central Park gained popularity quickly, and by the early 1900s the park had a tennis court, a bandshell, and large gardens. It became a popular spot to get away from city life. In fact, Central Park was so well liked in its early years that the city had a difficult time maintaining it. As the number of people living in the area decreased through the 1970s on, so



Edmonton Street looking West, postcard from the Prairie Postcard Collection. Image courtesy of Peel's Prairie Provinces, a digital initiative of the University of Alberta Libraries.

did the popularity of Central Park. Less use led to safety concerns and even fewer people.

In 1985 the City of Winnipeg's Department of Environment Planning hired the landscape architecture firm David Wagner Associates Inc. to design an extension to Central Park. The purpose of this project was to create a neighbourhood identity for a community that was undergoing revitalisation and change. The expansion of the

park closed off a section of Qu'Appelle Street, which allowed for the park to be expanded to Ellice Avenue. The master plan, based on a vision of then mayor Bill Norrie, was to link Central Park to the Legislature grounds. The development of North Portage, and the construction of Portage Place Mall between 1985 and 1987, meant that these further extensions to the park were never realised.

In 2008, the City of Winnipeg launched a major revitalisation of the park. Designed by Scatliff+Miller+Murray and completed in 2012, the project added a wading pool and spray park, an artificial turf, four-season slides, and an interactive sand and water play area with a play structure.



Tour Stops

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Waddell Fountain, n.d. Image courtesy of Henry Kalen fonds, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections.

1. Waddell Fountain

400 Cumberland Avenue, 1903

ARCHITECT: John Manuel

The Waddell Fountain, built in 1914, is Central Park's most well-known structure. Architect John Manuel based his design on an 1844 Gothic Revival monument in Edinburgh dedicated to Romantic poet Sir Walter Scott.

The Waddell fountain is an example of Gothic Revival architecture. The stone fountain sits on a granite base and has a concrete basement, where the water pump is located. If you look at it from different angles, you will see that the fountain is identically arranged on all sides, with arch and floral motifs, pinnacles, and four lions' heads that supply the water. You will also see the name, Waddell Fountain, carved twice on the structure.

The history of this Winnipeg landmark is quite the story. The fountain was constructed in memory of Emily Margaret Waddell, who lived in Winnipeg with her husband Thomas Waddell. In 1909, Emily died after an operation in Rochester, Minnesota. Emily had written a will in 1904, but it was not found until 1911, two years after her death. In it, Emily stated that if Thomas were ever to remarry, he would have to donate \$10,000 to the City of Winnipeg to build a fountain in Central Park. When the will was discovered, Thomas was intending to remarry, but was stuck because he did not have the money to donate to the City. By 1914, he managed to collect enough money and chose John Manuel's design for the fountain.

After many years of neglect, the fountain was in desperate need of rehabilitation. In 2010, the City of Winnipeg hired Cohlmeier Architects and Alpha Masonry to restore it. The fountain was dismantled into pieces and moved to an offsite location where

the repairs were completed. New pieces of limestone were carved to replace pieces of the original fountain that were damaged or had gone missing. The fountain is once again a functional and beautiful landmark in the park.



Bernard House, c. 1903. Image courtesy of City of Winnipeg, Historical Buildings Committee Report

2. Benard House

454 Edmonton Street, 1903

ARCHITECT: Joseph Greenfield

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Central Park had become one of Winnipeg's most exclusive neighbourhoods. The Benard House at 454 Edmonton Street is a great example of the early residential development in the area. The two-and-a-half storey home is located on the corner of Edmonton Street and Cumberland Avenue, on the north-western tip of what had been the Hudson's Bay Reserve. The brick home sits on a limestone rubble foundation and faces two directions. The use of various shapes, materials, and colours results in the dwelling's asymmetrical composition.

The home was designed by Joseph Greenfield and built by contractors Malcom Brothers in



Benard House, 2019.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

partnership with S.B. Ritchie in 1903. Greenfield had trained and worked in England and Toronto before arriving in Winnipeg in 1885. It was only shortly after he designed this home that he became the Manitoba superintendent for Public Works for the Dominion government.

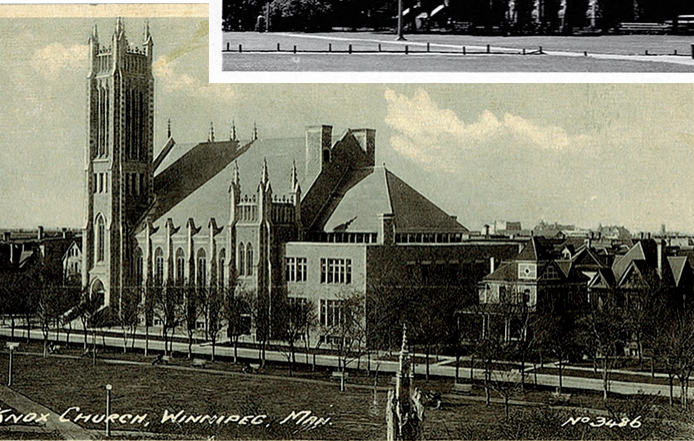
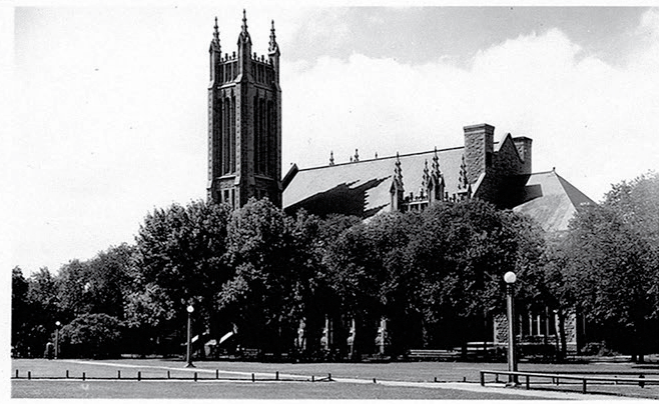
The Benard House is an example of the Queen Anne Revival Style, a style that dominated much of the residential architecture in North America



Benard House, 2019.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

at the end of the nineteenth century. The style had become popular as a result of the publication of building design books, including George Palliser's *Modern Building's Patter Book*.

The Benard House had originally been built for Walter R. Fish, a travelling salesman, and Edith Fish. However, it was sold to Hermisdas and Louisa Benard, who had been in the hotel business, shortly after its construction. The home now houses offices.



Knox United Church, postcards from the Prairie Postcard Collection. Image courtesy of Peel's Prairie Provinces, a digital initiative of the University of Alberta Libraries.

3. Knox United Church

400 Edmonton Street, 1914–18

ARCHITECT: John H.G. Russell

Knox United Church, originally a Presbyterian church, was built between 1914 and 1918. It was designed by the prominent architect John H.G. Russell, the architect responsible for the design of both Augustine (1903–04) and Westminster (1911–12) United churches. Knox is the largest United church in Manitoba and is a wonderful example of Late Gothic Revival architecture. Made of reinforced concrete, steel, and stone, the church was designed to accommodate a range of needs, incorporating a gymnasium, chapel, and meeting space.

The exterior of the church features walls of rusticated Manitoba Tyndall limestone, providing contrast to the smooth stone door and window openings. The arrangement and design of the

windows and doors are distinctively Gothic. The interior of the church also contains several elements of Gothic Revival, including the arched detailing in the staircases and the details in the woodwork and pews.

If you look to the top of the tower, you may notice something is missing. Early on a Friday morning in 2010, Knox United Church was struck by lightning. The lightning caused the spire, a large piece of Tyndall limestone at the top of the tower, to fall down. This piece of stone fell onto the steps of the church (causing damage) and then rolled onto the street, just missing vehicles parked there. If you look across Edmonton Street, you'll see a piece of the stone placed in the park. The stone was turned into a memorial, acting as a testament to the link between Knox United Church and Central Park.



Hoover and Town House, n.d. Image courtesy of City of Winnipeg, Historical Buildings Committee Report.

4. Hoover and Town House

368–370 Edmonton Street, 1901

ARCHITECT: Johann Schwab

The Hoover and Town House is one of the remaining turn-of-the-century homes that had originally lined Central Park. Over the years, many of the homes lining Central Park were torn down or heavily altered. Luckily, the exterior of this duplex



Hoover and Town House, c.1903. Image courtesy of City of Winnipeg, Historical Buildings Committee Report.

remains relatively true to how it appeared when it was constructed in 1901; however, there have been major alterations to the interior.

Business partners Martin Hoover and Alfred Town chose a relatively unknown architect, German-born Johann Schwab, to design their duplex. Constructed in 1901 for \$8,000, the building is designed in the Queen Anne Style. It rests on an 18-inch stone foundation anchored on stone footings. Defining qualities of the Queen Anne Style include the steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, the elaborate porch, and the variety of textures and masses. Of particular note is the wooden “gingerbread” decoration and the “fish-scale” shingles in the gables.



MacDonald Building, 2019.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

5. MacDonald Building

344 Edmonton Street, 1958

ARCHITECTS: Smith Carter Searle and Associates
(now Architecture49)

The MacDonald building was constructed for the federal government’s new regional office of the Unemployment Insurance Company. It is a late example of the federal government’s postwar expansion of social and civil services.



MacDonald Building, 2019.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

Smith Carter Searle (now Architecture49), a notable Winnipeg architectural firm, designed the building in 1958. The firm has been responsible for many of Winnipeg's most prominent modern-era buildings

The architects designed the modest four-storey office block with functionality in mind—they were more concerned with how the building worked than with how it looked. The structure is of a simple steel

frame that carries masonry walls on a concrete block. For aesthetic purposes, the architects covered the exterior of the building with cream brick and Tyndall limestone. Vertical fins are a particular feature of this building, as well as the use of stone spandrels (located between the windows) instead of the more common curtain wall structure of many federal government buildings of this period.

It is not certain if the building was named for Prime Minister John A. Macdonald or his son Sir Hugh John Macdonald, former premier of the province. The building still houses government offices.



DIY Field, 2011. Image by Leif Norman.

6. DIY Field

Central Park at the corner of Ellice and Edmonton, 2011

ARTIST: Germaine Koh

DIY Field is an interactive grid of 38 pedestrian-scale light posts on a sloped piece of land at the southern edge of Central Park. In keeping with the themes of play developed throughout the park, each post was designed so that visitors could interact or play with them, changing light and colour as they wished.

The posts make up a piece of public art created by the Canadian visual artist Germaine Koh. Called DIY Field, the project was developed through the Winnipeg Arts Council's Public Art program. What makes public art different from other forms of art is that it is art created solely for public spaces. That being said, it is not just a piece of art that is placed somewhere in public. Public art is designed and created with location in mind, aiming to respond to and enhance the environment it inhabits. Inspired by the concept of play, Koh's large-scale installation was designed specifically with Central Park in mind. The steel light posts are reminiscent of sports equipment one might find in a park, including pylons and goal posts.

Each of these posts contains energy-efficient RGB (red, green, blue) LED lights that are covered with a frosted acrylic tube. There are three buttons on each post and each of these buttons can turn a different colour of the LED light on and off. When you turn on

more than one light, the colours from the different lights mix and you get a new colour. Each post can make eight colours: red, green, blue, yellow, cyan, magenta, white, and no light.

Through the manipulation of the artwork, the viewer, or rather participant, is invited to change the mood and atmosphere of the surrounding area. The installation speaks to the larger vision of public spaces that are shaped with citizens in mind.



Central Park Site Plan. Image courtesy of Scatliff+Miller+Murray.

7. Central Park Landscape Design

Central Park, 2012

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: Scatliff+Miller+Murray

Even though Central Park has existed for more than a century, it has gone through many changes. In 2008, the City approved a \$5.6-million revitalisation of the park. Central Park, as you see it today, was completed in 2012 and was designed by the landscape architecture firm Scatliff+Miller+Murray.

The revitalized park features a four-season slide/toboggan facility, right next to the public art piece *DIY Field*. There is an interactive sand and water play area and an open area of artificial turf that can be used as a place to play sports. In the summer, you often see folks playing soccer and in the winter the space is turned into a skating rink for ice sports. There is also a wading pool and spray park near the Waddell Fountain, which has become a popular destination for families living in the area. When the aquatic play pad was constructed, it was Winnipeg's largest splash park.

Since its reopening in 2012, Central Park has become a vibrant urban park. Its success is directly linked to the landscape architects' commitment to consulting the community and asking them what they wanted from their park. Central Park has been celebrated by community members for doing exactly what they hoped the revitalization of the park would do: create a space for people to come together.



Exterior, Warwick Apartments, 1984.
Image courtesy of *Winnipeg Free Press* Archives.

8. Warwick Apartments

366 Qu'Appelle Avenue, 1909

ARCHITECT: William Wallace Blair

RENOVATIONS: Marshall Haid Architects, 1986

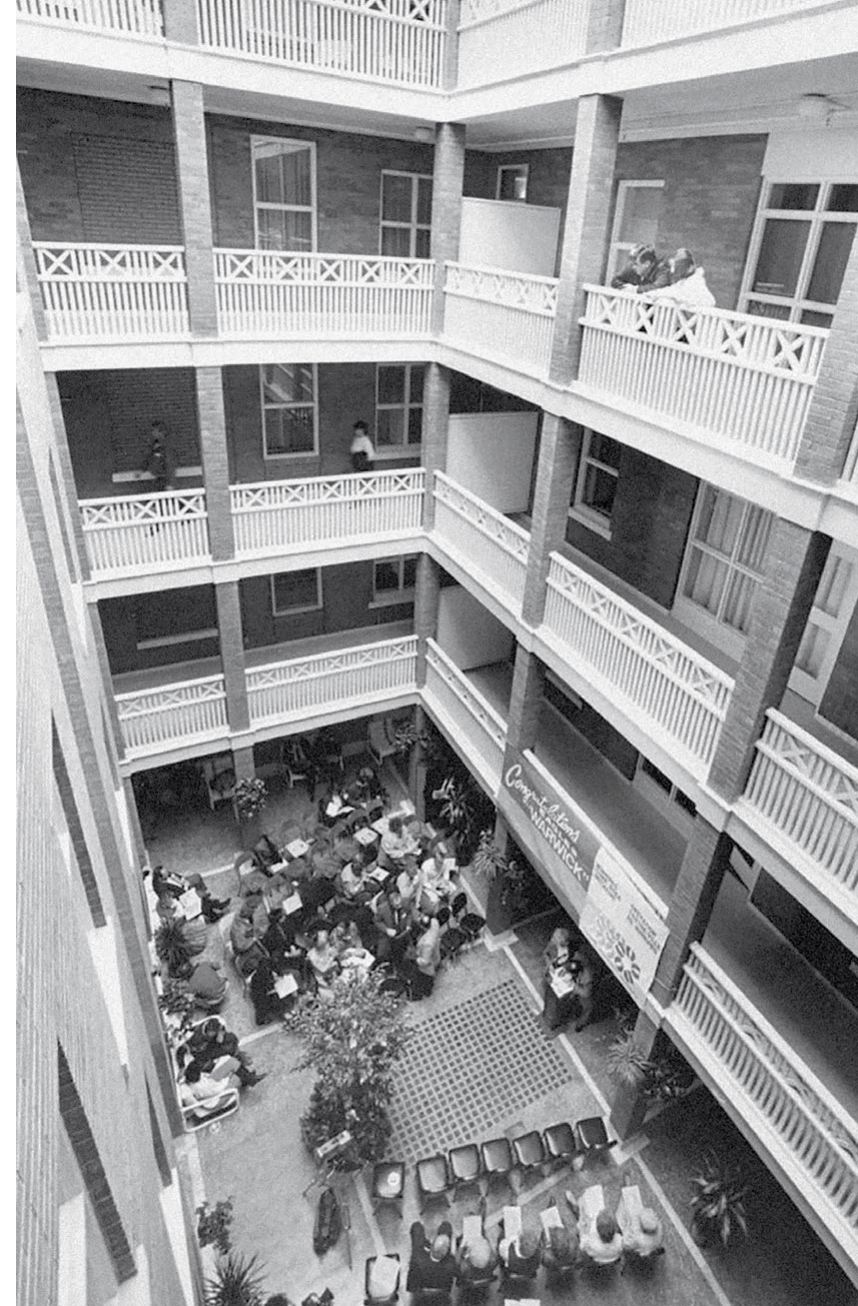
The elegant Warwick Apartments, with its innovative interior courtyard and vertical runs of bay windows, is one of a handful of surviving



Exterior, Warwick Apartments, 1986.
Image courtesy of Winnipeg Free Press Archives.

luxury blocks that represent the apex of early twentieth century apartment block design in Winnipeg. Designed by architect William Wallace Blair, Warwick Apartments has been referred to as the apartment block that changed the way Winnipeggers lived.

Coming out of a worldwide depression and a housing shortage in 1908, there was demand for a new, yet still elegant, way of living. Apartment



Interior Courtyard, Warwick Apartments, 1987.
Image courtesy of Winnipeg Free Press Archives.



Exterior, Warwick Apartments, n.d.
Image courtesy of Winnipeg Building Index.

blocks already existed in Winnipeg, but they were small walk-ups and were known for being unclean and overcrowded. They did not get much natural light and had air circulation problems. Blair set out to solve these issues and designed an apartment block with the aim of appealing to middle-class citizens. He designed the Warwick's original 66 suites around a rectangular interior courtyard. The design included windows on all four sides and balconies to provide good ventilation. The result was comfortable, well-lit suites that soon became home for young professionals—the exact clientele it was built for.

Penner Properties Western Ltd., and Marshall Haid Associates Ltd., worked on a \$3-million renovation of the Warwick in 1986. Their renovations included rehabilitating all of the suites and replacing the windows. After the renovations, the Warwick reopened as a housing co-operative.



Exterior at the corner of Hargrave Street and Cumberland Avenue, Ambassador Apartments, 1976. Image courtesy of Winnipeg Tribune Fonds, University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections.

9. Ambassador Apartments

379 Hargrave Street, 1909

ARCHITECT: John Woodman

Standing at the corner of Qu'Appelle and Hargrave:

The Ambassador Apartments is a five-storey apartment block constructed of reinforced concrete and buff brick. Originally called the Breadalbane, the building was designed by local architect John Woodman and was a project of J. M. McArthur and James Fisher. Like the Warwick, the Ambassador Apartments was meant to be an upscale apartment block and was designed to provide proper air ventilation and to allow for more natural light to enter the building.



Ambassador Apartments, 2019
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

The construction of the Ambassador Apartments began in 1909 but was hindered due to heavy summer rain. In fact, the rain caused a serious accident on the construction site. The foundation walls had been completed and concrete had been poured over a beam-in-board framework. It was thought that the temporary supports were insufficient, and four men were sent to install additional support posts. Due to the heavy rains,

water had pooled in the open basement and had softened the base, which resulted in the supports sinking. At a critical moment, the wet and heavy concrete collapsed on the men. Two of the four men had to be dug out and rushed to hospital. The apartment had to be rebuilt, and the construction went more smoothly the second time around.

Winnipeg had what has been called a “love affair” with apartment blocks in the early twentieth century. In 1911, there were approximately 100 apartment buildings in the city, 10 times more than other Canadian cities, including Montreal and Toronto.

Standing at the corner of Hargrave and Cumberland:

From this angle, the building looks very different. The curved corner that you see has what is referred to as a ‘flatiron’ appearance—a unique triangular shape that resembles a flatiron. The apartment block was designed this way due to the shape



Ambassador Apartments, 2019
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

of the irregular lot, but also to maximise profit. The most common and well-known example of this kind of building is the Fuller Building, also known as the Flatiron Building, in New York. The Fuller building was constructed in 1902 and is considered the prototype for this style of building. While this design was quite popular in North America during the early twentieth century, few flatiron buildings survive.



First Baptist Church c. 1910, postcard from the Prairie Postcard Collection. Image courtesy of Peel's Prairie Provinces, a digital initiative of the University of Alberta Libraries.

10. Calvary Temple, formerly the First Baptist Church

400 Hargrave Street, 1893

ARCHITECTS: Messrs. Langley and Burke

ADDITION: J H G Russell, 1904

The first iteration of the Calvary Temple, then called the First Baptist Church, was designed by Toronto architects Messrs. Langley and Burke.



Calvary Temple, 2019.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

The church opened its basement in 1893 to serve the congregation, but the structure would not be completed until the next year. The congregation grew significantly over the next decade, and the church required an addition to accommodate the new members. Architect J H G Russell was hired to design this two-storey addition on the left side of the building along Cumberland Avenue. It expanded the church's capacity to accommodate 1,500 people.

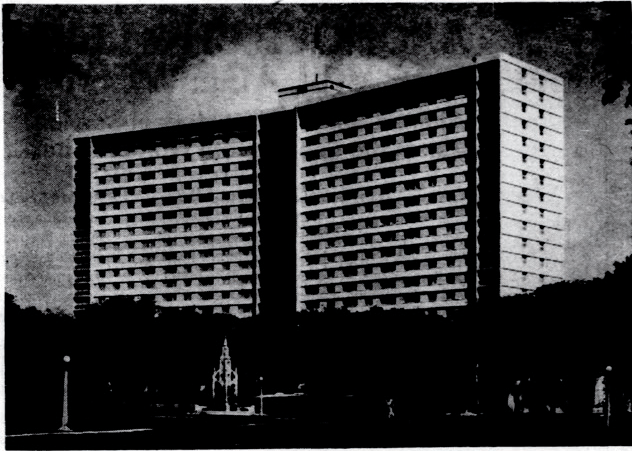
During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the First Baptist Church's downtown location suffered as members began to move to the suburbs. The First Baptists sold the building to the Pentecostals, and the church was renamed the Calvary Temple. The



Calvary Temple, 2019.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

Pentecostals added a Sunday School in 1955 to the east side of the Church and a Christian Education Centre to the west side in 1960.

In 1985, the beautiful brick church was demolished, except for the tower, which is a municipally designated historic site. A new building was constructed to replace the demolished church and acts as a Christian education centre.



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11. Regency Towers

411 Cumberland Avenue, 1964

ARCHITECT: John MacDonald

In the mid-1960s, the trend in many large Canadian cities was to “return from suburbia.” In other words, some folks were choosing to move back into the city centre. Land prices and taxes in the suburbs were increasing, and transportation from one’s home to one’s workplace was considered a significant problem. Essentially, people wanted to live closer to work and did not want the added chore of keeping up a home. However, downtown land was expensive, which resulted in contractors building high to make profit. One of these buildings was Regency Towers, a \$5-million project.

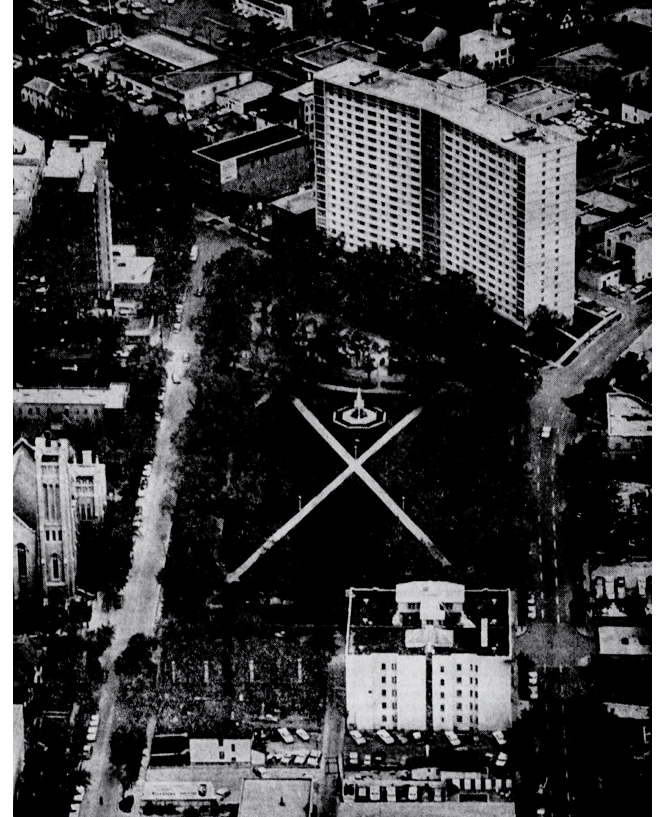
At the time of its construction in 1964, Regency Towers, also known as Central Park Towers, was Winnipeg’s tallest structure. The 21-storey building

Advert in *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1967.
Image courtesy of *The Winnipeg Tribune*.



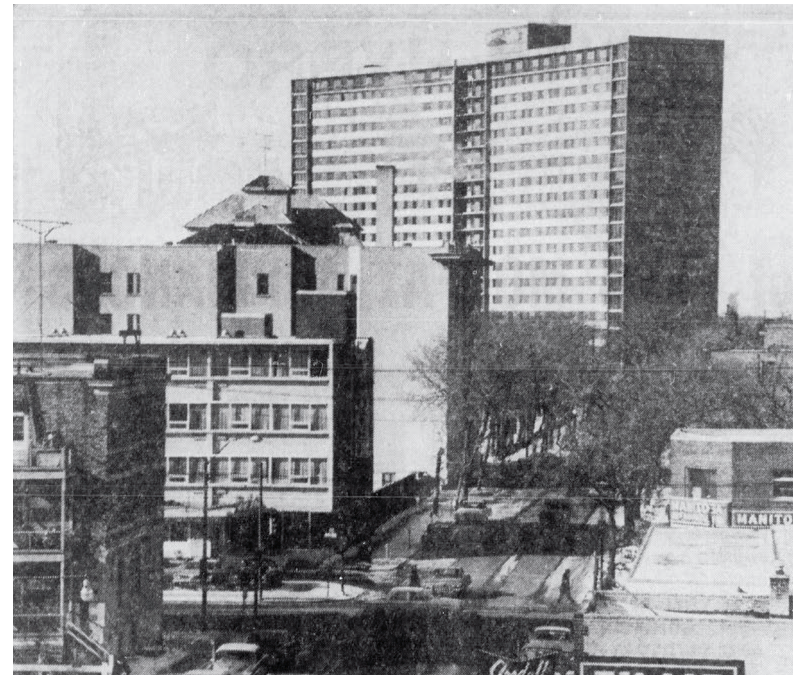
Regency Towers under construction, c. 1964.
Image courtesy of Winnipeg Building Index.

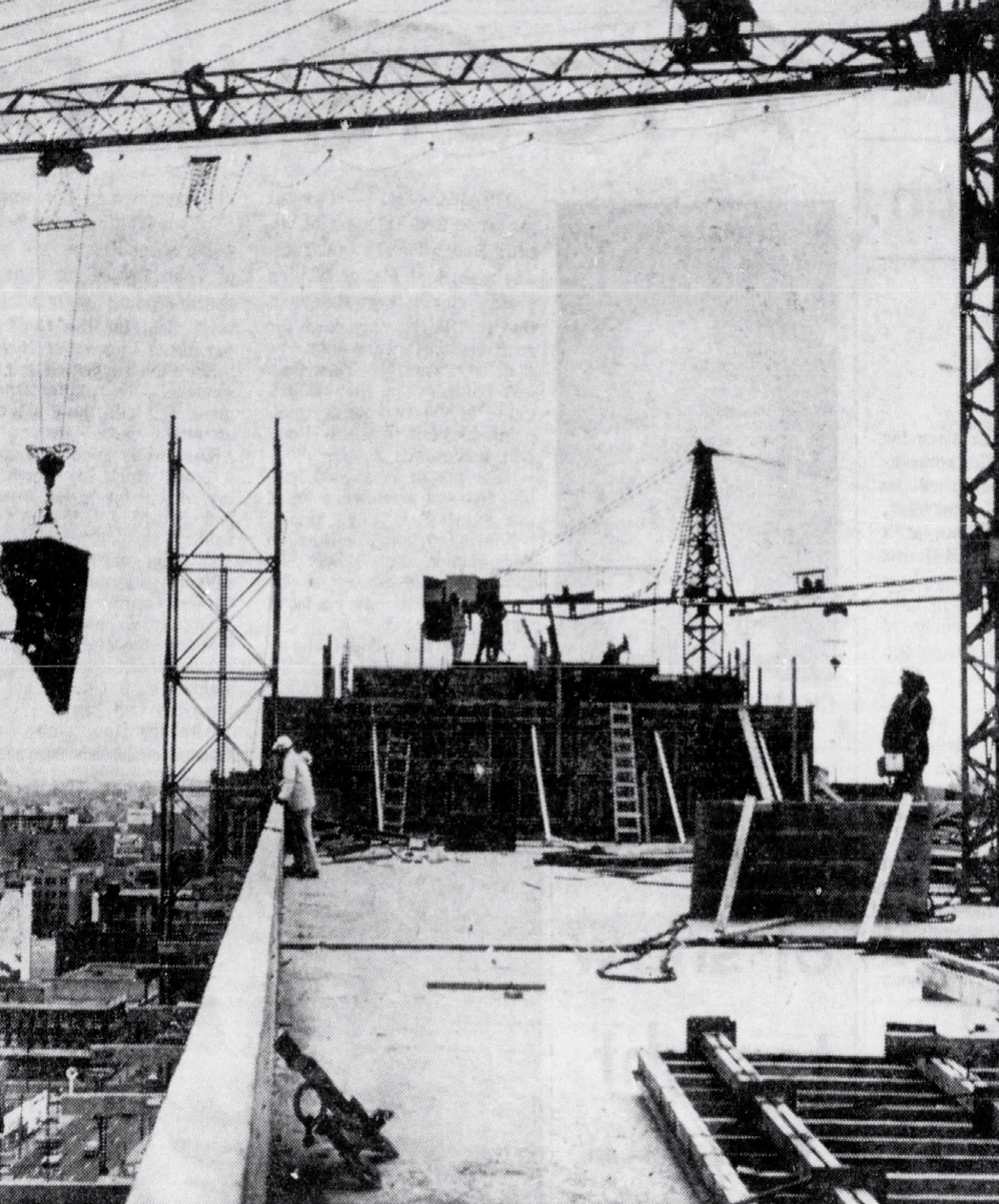
was even called Canada's largest apartment,
containing the highest number of units of
any Canadian apartment block: a total of 407
bachelor, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom suites.
Regency Towers also contained a grocery store, a
dry-cleaning depot, a swimming pool, and a party
room. The apartment became home to single people,
newly-weds, and retired couples with grown families.



Aerial photograph of Central Park, 1964.
Image courtesy of *The Winnipeg Tribune*.

Regency Towers, 1964. Image courtesy of *The Winnipeg Tribune*.





Regency Towers under construction, 1964.
Image courtesy of *The Winnipeg Tribune*.



A woman looks out her apartment window, Regency Towers, 1964.
Image courtesy of *The Winnipeg Tribune*.

The towers opened to mostly positive reviews, being touted as “impressive” in *The Winnipeg Tribune*. Three years after its opening, the towers were still receiving praise in the local news. An article from *The Winnipeg Tribune* stated: “Three years ago, Regency Towers was a first in apartment construction in downtown Winnipeg. Today, it retains its leadership as an outstanding downtown residence unit.”



Central Park Pavilion, 2010.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.



Central Park Pavilion, 2010.
Image by Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.

12. Central Park Pavilion

400 Cumberland Avenue, 2010

ARCHITECT: David Penner Architect

Designed by Winnipeg architect David Penner as part of the redevelopment of the park, the Central Park Pavilion serves Central Park's Wading Pool and Aquatic Play Pad. The structure houses washrooms, lockers, and a mechanical room.

The simple and small contemporary building responds well to its environment. Unlike many maintenance buildings, the pavilion is largely transparent. The transparency provides

an educational element and complements the aquatic area well, keeping the park open and visible. The structure is made of site-cast concrete with a white-framed curtain wall system.

Inside the water park, there is a piece of concrete panel held up by a series of playfully positioned white posts. This structure has a waterfall at one end, allowing people to run through and engage with the pavilion in a unique way. It also marks a playful transition between the water park and the building, similar to how **DIY** Field marks a playful entrance into Central Park.



Central Park Splash Pad and Pavilion, with the Regency Towers in the background. Image courtesy of Scatliff+Miller+Murray.



Central Park Splash Pad.
Image courtesy of Scatliff+Miller+Murray.

13. Central Park Wading Pool and Aquatic Play Pad

400 Cumberland Avenue, 2010

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: Scatliff+Miller+Murray

The Central Park Wading Pool and Aquatic Play Pad was part of the larger redevelopment of Central Park, designed by Scatliff+Miller+Murray. The intent was to provide a range of fun, recreational activities for a growing inner-city population. The play pad is wheelchair accessible. Water comes from the ground and on high through water cannons and concrete islands. A wonderful garden of bright, larger-than-life daisies spray cooling water on a hot day.

Biographies

People

William Wallace Blair

(1852–1916)

William Wallace Blair was born in Ireland in 1852. He studied at the Academical Institute of Belfast and went on to work in England before immigrating to Hamilton, Ontario in 1876. Shortly thereafter he moved his practice to Toronto, eventually returning to Ireland in 1884. In 1890, Blair moved to Chicago, Illinois where he worked for 15 years before moving to Winnipeg. Blair practised in Winnipeg between 1905 and 1914, becoming one of the city's most prominent architects of the early twentieth century.

Joseph Greenfield

(1845–1910)

Joseph Greenfield was born in England in 1845. He trained and worked in both England and Toronto, Ontario before relocating to Winnipeg. He partnered briefly with Edward McCoskrie after his arrival, but ultimately established his own practice in the city. He left his private practice in 1905 to become the local Manitoba superintendent for Public Works for the Dominion government.

Germain Koh

(b. 1967)

Germaine Koh is a Canadian visual artist based in Vancouver, British Columbia. Koh's work, which has been exhibited internationally, is concerned with everyday actions, objects, and places. Koh was a finalist for the 2004 Sobey Art Award and

the recipient of the 2010 VIVA Award. She was formerly an Assistant Curator at the National Gallery of Canada.

John Manuel

(1879–1933)

John Manuel was born in Hawick, Scotland in 1879. He studied architecture at the Heriot Watt College in Edinburgh and worked as an assistant to architect Hippolyte J. Blanc and at the offices of Matear & Simon. After working briefly in London, England, Manuel immigrated to Winnipeg in 1912. It is likely that Manuel came to Winnipeg because Frank Simon, of Matear & Simon, had won the international competition for the design of the Manitoba Legislative Building. Manuel worked as the local supervising architect on the project.

John H. G. Russell

(1863–1946)

John H. G. Russell was born in Toronto, Ontario and educated at the Toronto Model School.

After graduation he worked as a draughtsman, eventually moving to Winnipeg in 1882. He set up his own architectural practice in 1885, which went on to design some of Winnipeg's most prominent buildings.

Russell served as the Vice-President (1906) and President (1910) of the Manitoba Association of Architects.

Johann Schwab

(1864–1931)

Johann Schwab was an Austrian-born architect who practised in Winnipeg during the first decade of the twentieth century. Little is known about Schwab's early education and career prior to his arrival in

Winnipeg in 1898. Schwab designed residential and commercial buildings as well as places of worship.

John Woodman

(1860–1944)

John Woodman was born in Oshawa, Ontario in 1860 and arrived in Winnipeg in 1880. Woodman worked as Chief Engineer of the Western Division of the Canadian Pacific Railway until he established his own architectural practice in Winnipeg in 1901. He went on to design some of Winnipeg's most notable early twentieth century structures, including the Paris Building (259 Portage Avenue), the Lindsay Building (228 Notre Dame Avenue), and the Eaton's Building (320 Portage Avenue, demolished).

Firms

David Penner Architect

David Penner Architect is a Winnipeg-based consulting firm. Led by architect David Penner, the firm has designed an array of cultural, commercial, institutional, and residential projects. Penner graduated with a Master of Architecture in 1985 and trained at the offices of Stechesen Katz Architects, Calnitsky Heshka Associates, James and Rollier, and Smith Carter Partners.

Scatliff+Miller+Murray

The landscape architecture firm Scatliff+Murray+Miller began as a partnership between Michael Scatliff and Ken Rech—both graduates of the University of Manitoba—and was incorporated in 1989. The firm changed its name in 2000, reflecting the addition of new partners Deron

Miller and Derek Murray. The firm operates offices out of Winnipeg (head office), Calgary, and Regina.

Architecture49

formerly Smith Carter Searle and Associates

In late 1947, three recent University of Manitoba graduates—Ernest J. Smith, Dennis H. Carter, and Walter L. Katelnikoff—partnered to establish an architecture firm which went on to be one of the central players in the development and definition of design in Winnipeg during the twentieth century.

In 2012, Smith Carter was acquired by Montreal-based engineering and professional consulting firm Genivar Inc. In 2014, the company, with a group of other architecture firms, forged a new firm under the name of Architecture49.

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